SUBJECTS.

136. Certain suggestions for remedying the growing poverty of the people.

Mr. Vikraman Velayudhan Unnithan (Member, Quilon taluk) said that the people of Travancore were as a whole becoming poorer. The paddy was the staple produce of the country and the principal food-grain of the people. Paddy cultivation was becoming less successful and consequently the import value of paddy and rice into Travancore had risen from 48½ lakhs of rupees in 1083 to 90 and odd lakhs of rupees in 1087. The indigenous supply would not be sufficient for 25 per cent of the people at present. Even with the large import of paddy and rice, the poor people found it difficult to procure them at times for want of a sufficient store at any important centre. To add to such difficulties of the poverty-stricken ryots, there were the uncontrolled system of weights and measures, the scarcity of copper coins in exchange for the rupee, and the hardships on account of excessive taxation and ferry charges. Indigenous articles for daily use were unknown in Travancore. The industries of the country which had not yet died out were in their rude primitive stage and could not afford sufficient profits to the men engaged in them. Weaving, for example, with the old hand-looms, could not compete with the foreign system, and the weavers of Travancore had almost discontinued their professional work and turned cultivators. The Government did not pay any attention to the industries of the country. Other Native States of India were in that respect far advanced. He said that the system of imparting Industrial and Technical Education in the State of Baroda might be taken as a model for Travancore. There, they had the Central Industrial School called "Kalabhavanam" and separate schools for each taluk called "Kalamandiram"; but Travancore had not one such school worth the name. The Member therefore made the following suggestions for the consideration of the Government to remedy the deplorable condition of the people of the country :—

(1) Agricultural banks should be opened in all important centres of the State and paddy and rice made available in them for supply to the poor people at a moderate price at all times of the year.

(2) An industrial survey of the country should be conducted and measures devised for the development of the industries of the State. A Director of Industries might be appointed to investigate into the industrial condition of the people and technical and industrial schools started as in Baroda.

(3) Cheap industries like the manufacture of pencils and matches should be undertaken by the Government themselves.

(4) Not less than six students should be sent to foreign countries on Government scholarship to study various industries.

(5) Industrial education of some form should be introduced into the ordinary schools of the State.

(6) Co-operative credit societies should be started.

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